

American people the best care at the lowest cost, that reins in insurance companies, strengthens businesses, and finally gives families the choices they need and the security they deserve.

Thanks.

## Remarks at the Children's National Medical Center *July 20, 2009*

Hello, everybody. Please have a seat. Well, I just first of all want to thank the Children's Hospital for hosting us today, and I want to thank the participants: Joseph Wright, Brian Jacobs, Yewande Johnson, Michael Knappe, Regina Hartridge, and Kathleen Quigley.

I just had the opportunity to talk to doctors, nurses, physician's assistants, and administrators at this extraordinary institution. We spoke about some of the strains on our health care system and some of the strains our health care system places on parents with sick children.

We spoke about the amount of time and money wasted on insurance-driven bureaucracy. We spoke about the growing number of Americans who are uninsured and underinsured. We spoke about what's wrong with a system where women can't always afford maternity care and parents can't afford checkups for their kids and end up seeking treatment in emergency rooms like the ones here at Children's. We spoke about the fact that it's very hard even for families who have health insurance to access primary care physicians and pediatricians. In a city like Washington, DC, you've got all the doctors in one half of the city, very few doctors in the other half of the city. And part of that has to do with just the manner in which reimbursement is taking place and the disincentives for doctors, nurses, and physician's assistants in caring for those who are most in need. And we spoke about where we're headed if we once again delay and defer health insurance reform.

Now, these health care professionals are doing heroic work each and every day to save the lives of America's children. But they're being forced to fight through a system that works better for drug companies and insurance companies than for the American people that all these

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3 p.m. on July 17 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on July 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 17, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on July 18.

wonderful health professionals entered their profession to serve.

And over the past decade, premiums have doubled in America, out-of-pocket costs have shot up by a third, deductibles have continued to climb. And yet even as America's families have been battered by spiraling health care costs, health insurance companies and their executives have reaped windfall profits from a broken system.

Now, we've talked this problem to death, year after year. But unless we act—and act now—none of this will change. Just a quick statistic I heard about this hospital: Just a few years ago, there were approximately 50,000 people coming into the emergency room. Now they've got 85,000. There's been almost a doubling of emergency room care in a relatively short span of time, which is putting enormous strains on the system as a whole. That's the status quo, and it's only going to get worse.

If we do nothing, then families will spend more and more of their income for less and less care; the number of people who lose their insurance because they've lost or changed jobs will continue to grow; more children will be denied coverage on account of asthma or a heart condition; jobs will be lost, take-home pay will be lower, businesses will shutter, and we will continue to waste hundreds of billions of dollars on insurance company boondoggles and inefficiencies that add to our financial burdens without making us any healthier.

So the need for reform is urgent and it is indisputable. No one denies that we're on an unsustainable path. We all know there are more efficient ways of doing it. We just—I spoke to the chief information officer here at the hospital, and he talked about some wonderful ways in which we could potentially gather up electronic

medical records and information for every child, not just that comes to this hospital but in the entire region, and how much money could be saved and how the health of these kids could be improved. But it requires an investment.

Now, there are some in these—this town who are content to perpetuate the status quo, are in fact fighting reform on behalf of powerful special interests. There are others who recognize the problem, but believe—or perhaps, hope—that we can put off the hard work of insurance reform for another day, another year, and another decade.

Just the other day, one Republican Senator said, and I'm quoting him now, "If we're able to stop Obama on this, it will be his Waterloo. It will break him." Think about that: This isn't about me; this isn't about politics. This is about a health care system that is breaking America's families, breaking America's businesses, and breaking America's economy.

And we can't afford the politics of delay and defeat when it comes to health care. Not this time—not now. There are too many lives and livelihoods at stake. There are too many families who will be crushed if insurance premiums continue to rise three times as fast as wages. There are too many businesses that will be forced to shed workers, scale back benefits, or drop coverage unless we get spiraling health care costs under control.

The reforms we seek would bring greater competition, choice, savings, and inefficiencies [efficiencies]<sup>\*</sup> to our health care system and greater stability and security to America's families and businesses. For the average American, it will mean lower costs, more options, and coverage you can count on. It will save you and your family money, if we have a more efficient health care system. You won't have to worry about being priced out of the market. You won't have to worry about one illness leading your family into financial ruin. You won't have to worry that you won't be able to afford treatment for a child who gets sick.

We can and we must make all these reforms, and we can do it in a way that does not add to our deficits over the next decade. I've said this before. Let me repeat: The bill I sign must reflect my commitment and the commitment of Congress to slow the growth of health care costs over the long run. That's how we can ensure that health care reforms strengthens our national—our Nation's fiscal health at the same time.

Now, we always knew that passing health care reform wouldn't be easy. We always knew that doing what is right would be hard. There's just a tendency towards inertia in this town. I understand that as well as anybody. But we're a country that chooses the harder right over the easier wrong. That's what we have to do this time. We have to do that once more.

So let's fight our way through the politics of the moment. Let's pass reform by the end of this year. Let's commit ourselves to delivering our country a better future. And that future will be seen in a place like Children's Hospital, when young people are getting the care that they deserve and they need, when they need it, and we don't have an overcrowded emergency room that's putting enormous burdens on this excellent institution. I think we can accomplish that, but we're going to have to do some work over the next few weeks and the next few months.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph L. Wright, senior vice president, Child Health Advocacy Institute, Brian Jacobs, vice president and chief medical information officer, Yewande J. Johnson, pediatric anesthesiologist, Michael Knapp, executive director, Emergency Medicine Trauma Services, Kathleen Quigley, physician assistant, Division of Neurosurgery, Children's National Medical Center; Regina Hartridge, Children's Health Project of the District of Columbia; and Sen. James W. DeMint.

---

<sup>\*</sup> White House correction.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Crewmembers of the *Apollo 11* Moon Landing

July 20, 2009

Very rarely do I have such an extraordinary pleasure as I have today to welcome three iconic figures, three genuine American heroes. To have Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Buzz Aldrin here beside me is just wonderful. And I think that all of us recall the moment in which mankind finally was untethered from this planet and was able to explore the stars, the moment in which we had one of our own step on the Moon and leave that imprint that is there to this day. And it's because of the heroism, the calm under pressure, the grace with which these three gentlemen operated, but also the entire NASA family that was able to—at great risk oftentimes, and with great danger—was somehow able to lift our sights, not just here in the United States but around the world.

We now have a wonderful NASA Administrator in Charles Bolden and the Deputy Administrator Lori Garver. We are confident that they are going to be doing everything that they can in the decade to come to continue the inspirational mission of NASA. But I think it's fair to say that the touchstone for excellence in exploration and discovery is always going to be represented by the men of *Apollo 11*.

And so I'm grateful to them for taking the time to visit with us. The country continues to draw inspiration from what you've done. I should note, just personally, I grew up in Hawaii, as many of you know, and I still recall sitting on my grandfather's shoulders when those capsules would land in the middle of the Pacific, and they'd get brought back, and we'd go out, and we'd pretend like they could see us as we were waving at the folks coming home. And I remember waving American flags and my

grandfather telling me that the Apollo mission was an example of how Americans can do anything they put their minds to.

I also know that, as a consequence of the extraordinary work of NASA generally, that you inspired an entire generation of scientists and engineers that ended up really sparking the innovation, the drive, the entrepreneurship, the creativity back here on Earth. And I think it's very important for us to constantly remember that NASA was not only about feeding our curiosity, that sense of wonder, but also had extraordinary practical applications. And one of the things that I've committed to doing as President is making sure that math and science are cool again, and that we once again achieve the goal by 2020 of having the highest college graduation rates of any country on Earth, especially in the maths and science fields.

So I think on this 40th anniversary, we are—all of us thankful and grateful to all of you for what you've done, and we expect that there's, as we speak, another generation of kids out there who are looking up at the sky and are going to be the next Armstrong, Collins, and Aldrins. And we want to make sure that NASA is going to be there for them when they want to take their journey.

All right. Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:14 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Neil A. Armstrong, mission commander, Michael Collins, command module pilot, and Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., lunar module pilot, *Apollo 11*.

## Statement on a Meeting With Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

July 20, 2009

I enjoyed my meeting with President Monson and Elder Oaks. I'm grateful for the genealogical records that they brought with them and

am looking forward to reading through the materials with my daughters. It's something our family will treasure for years to come.